

VOL. 1

TROUBLE SHOOTING

SECTION 4

Trouble Shooting

Many of the MEDCOM facilities in our inventory were constructed several decades ago, using materials and technologies that are now considered outdated and aesthetically unappealing. In an effort to provide the facility managers and planners with options to address these conditions, this “Troubleshooting” section was developed. As options range in price and “degree of difficulty”, the best solution shall be determined by the facility’s administration.

In this section, recurring and pervasive problems are illustrated, with the suggested or recommended solution following.

Trouble Shooting



Floor mats in Front Lobby.

Flooring Issues

Floor material is slick when wet, causing a slipping/falling hazard for patients, visitors and staff. In most cases, the flooring material is either vinyl composition tile, seamless vinyl or terrazzo tile (surfaces which have no grit or abrasion).



Example of recessed walk-off mat.

Trouble Shooting

Flooring Solutions

1. **Provide walk-off mats at entrances, and slip-resistant mats where the problem is noticeable and the pedestrian traffic is heavy.**

Advantages: Low cost solution, quick remedy.

Disadvantages: Aesthetics are compromised; mats can be haphazardly thrown on floor causing visual clutter; wheeled traffic may have trouble rolling over mats; mats themselves could cause tripping hazard if buckled or edges are turned up.

Note: A recessed walk-off mat at entrance can be installed in lieu of the rubber mats thrown on floor. Costs are increased due to chipping out the floor in a vestibule or just inside the lobby doors, but the result is a coordinated flooring system that attractively offers slip resistance and dirt/water removal at the entry points. Walk-off materials range from vinyl to carpet.

2. **Replace flooring with a non-slip flooring material (such as Armstrong's Sure Tread vinyl product or Altro's Slip-Resistant flooring).**

Advantages: Provides slip resistance to area, wide range of color options.

3. **Replace flooring with quarry tile with abrasive finish.**

Advantages: Provides slip resistance to area, durable and long-lasting finish.

Disadvantages: Limited colors and sizes with high cost initial investment; may project an institutional or "back of the house" look; considerable down-time for staff and patients during removal and installation of materials; several grout joints can cause a bumpy ride for wheeled traffic and heavy equipment.

4. **Replace flooring with carpet.**

Advantages: Provides slip resistance to area, reduces noise and improves acoustics, several colors and patterns available, relatively low to medium cost "up front" investment.

Disadvantages: Can be difficult to clean, will soil much easier than other flooring options, must be replaced every 5-10 years depending on area and use, may not meet infection control requirements, ties up housekeeping due to cleaning.

Trouble Shooting



Structural Glazed Block in Corridors.

Wall Issues

Structural Glazed block walls are installed down major corridors, giving the facility an outdated and institutional appearance. Blocks meet the plaster wall surface approximately 60" above the finished floor, which contributes to the awkward scale of the space, and limits the use of artwork and signage. Many of these walls have a base tile that is lipped or coved, presenting an institutional look.



Example of wallcovering and paint in Corridors.

Trouble Shooting

Wall Solutions

1. **Paint structural glazed block with acrylic paint to blend in with plaster wall.**

Advantages: Low cost solution, quick remedy; can be quickly re-painted when marred, ceiling and floor finishes are not affected; numerous colors, textures and finishes available (solids, multi-flecks, etc.); base tile can be painted the same color.

Disadvantages: Structural block and grout joints are still visible; painting may not totally eliminate the institutional or “back of the house” look; will require medium degree of maintenance for touch-up; may still limit the placement of artwork and signage due to visible block/plaster juncture; paint at base tile will require constant touch-up due to cleaning equipment and carts.

2. **Skim out block wall at grout joints and block/plaster juncture and install vinyl wallcovering over block and plaster.**

Advantages: Relatively low to medium cost option; ceiling and floor finishes are not affected; numerous colors, textures and finishes available; creates an aesthetically-appealing and “upgraded look”; allows for an attractive placement of artwork and signage.

Disadvantages: Labor-intensive to skim out all walls (may drive up costs); wall surface must be extremely smooth for a successful installation of wallcovering; will require wall protection (bumper guards, corner guards, handrails/crashrails) to reduce damage caused by carts and equipment; base tile must either be painted or covered with a resilient base (these do not adhere well to the tile base and frequently fall off).

3. **Saw-cut base tile to eliminate the “toe” or lip, furr out walls with gypsum board and apply any number of wall finishes.**

Advantages: Totally eliminates the institutional look; allows facility to provide any acceptable wall finish to the space, creating a more aesthetically pleasing environment; allows for an attractive placement of artwork and signage; gypsum board over furr strips allows for new electrical and data drops to be installed within the wall.

Disadvantages: A high cost investment, affects both floors and ceiling system resulting in long down-time installations (new flooring and ceiling grid and tiles will have to be installed due to saw-cutting and changes to wall); reduces the width of the corridor by inches which may not be desirable; door frames and other openings will be affected by thicker wall.

Trouble Shooting



Inconsistent acoustical ceiling tile styles, old grid.



New ceiling tiles in 2' x 2' grid.

Ceiling Issues

Ceiling tiles installed throughout the facility are soiled and stained and T-grid appears discolored. Ceiling surface is dull and detracts from the interior environment. Ceiling tile styles and details may not be consistent throughout the facility. Tiles may sag, gap or may be damaged.

Trouble Shooting

Ceiling Solutions

1. Professionally clean and/or tint the ceiling tiles.

Advantages: Low cost solution (about half the cost of new ceiling systems), down-time is minimized; no work is required above the ceiling; ceiling system is treated “intact” (both tiles and grid are treated simultaneously).

Disadvantages: Treatment does not address sagging or damaged tiles, does not camouflage inconsistencies in tile style or size.

2. Replace ceiling tiles only.

Advantages: Allows facility to standardize on one type of ceiling tile style; new tiles create fresh and clean appearance; provides improved light reflectance; relatively limited down-time to install; may improve acoustics depending upon the type of ceiling tile selected; limited “above ceiling” work required.

Disadvantages: Medium to high cost solution; T-grid may still require painting or touch-up; tiles may begin to sag after time due to the size of the tile or to humidity; variances in tile size will not be addressed.

3. Replace entire ceiling system with new grid and 2'x 2' ceiling tiles.

Advantages: Creates a clean, consistent ceiling system; may improve acoustics depending upon the type of ceiling tile selected; reduces sag potential due to smaller tile size; provides improved light reflectance.

Disadvantages: High cost solution; down-time is considerable, walls may be affected when new trim pieces are installed; “above ceiling” area is disturbed.

Trouble Shooting



Lack of Wayfinding cues in corridor.

Wayfinding Issues

Facility is looking for ways to improve wayfinding cues and create more interest in their public spaces. Public corridors are typically outfitted with vinyl composition tiles or other type of resilient flooring, painted walls or vinyl wallcovering, and acoustical ceiling tile system. Interior signage is provided, but may be minimal or overkill, lacking balance and proper placement.



Example of Wayfinding cues in corridor.

Trouble Shooting

Wayfinding Solutions

1. **Create floor patterns at major corridor intersections and elevator lobbies with vinyl composition tile accents inlaid into existing VCT.**

Advantages: Low cost solution; down-time is minimal; broad range of colors and patterns available; easy to install; easy to maintain.

Disadvantages: None identified.

2. **Provide “landmark” pieces of artwork at key intersections and along path of traffic to cue the public through the space.**

Advantages: Quick remedy; easy to install; down-time is minimal; broad range of themes and types of artwork available.

Disadvantages: Price for artwork can range from moderate to expensive; artwork must be carefully selected to avoid offending patients or staff; may be exposed to damage or theft (security mount devices are recommended).

3. **Provide a comprehensive interior signage system that assists in wayfinding.**

Advantages: Allows facility to standardize on one type of interior signage system; provides the correct balance of informational and directional signage; unifies the facility.

Disadvantages: Medium to high cost solution, usually requires a professional consultant/designer to properly develop the signage plan.

4. **Provide special lighting (such as downlighting or decorative lighting) at destination spaces and decision points, and change finishes in these areas.**

Advantages: Creates a visual cue to patients that effectively moves them through the facility; heightens interest and adds aesthetic value to the space.

Disadvantages: Medium to high cost solution; down time required for installation; may involve a professional design consultant to plan the appropriate details.

Note: Each of these options can be incorporated as a “stand alone” consideration or can be combined together to create the optimum wayfinding solution.

Trouble Shooting



Inconsistent an inappropriate drapery fabrics and hardware in conference room.

Window Treatment Issues

Facility is seeking a comprehensive solution to window treatments throughout the facility. Windows currently incorporate several different products and materials as treatment, creating a “non-standard” solution. When viewed from the exterior, windows in the building display several different types of treatment solutions, which add to the disjointed and “non-standard” appearance.



Example of vertical blinds with upholstered cornice boards on window.

Trouble Shooting

Window Treatment Solutions

1. **Provide 1" aluminum mini-blinds to perimeter windows.**

Advantages: Low cost solution; down-time is minimal; broad range of colors and patterns available; easy to install; and maintain; provides excellent light and privacy control for space.

Disadvantages: Collects dust and requires regular cleaning; may not be the right solution for very wide windows; slats can be damaged fairly easily by children or by routine use.

2. **Provide vertical blinds to perimeter windows.**

Advantages: Broad range of colors and patterns available; blinds stack like conventional draperies; provides an "upscale" look to mini-blinds; provides good light and privacy control for space; good solution for wide windows.

Disadvantages: Medium to high cost solution (depending upon style); requires regular cleaning; vanes can become tangled and damaged by routine use; can be difficult to operate.

Note: The above two options may be "dressed up" in public areas with an upholstered cornice board or fabric valance that provides color and pattern.

3. **Provide woven roll-down shades to perimeter windows (such as Mechoshade).**

Advantages: Good range of colors and weaves available; certain styles allow visibility to outside when shade is drawn; easy to operate; can provide solar protection; glare and brightness control; room darkening shades available; offered in both manual and electrical operation.

Disadvantages: Medium to high cost solution; privacy is compromised after dark (for open weave products).

Trouble Shooting

Window Treatment Solutions

4. Provide draperies on windows.

Advantages: Provides noise absorption; can give space an “upscale” look; provides total privacy when closed; provides a degree of thermal insulation.

Disadvantages: Medium to high cost solution; must be professionally cleaned periodically for dust and dirt, rods/hardware and drapery may become damaged after routine use; might not be suitable for certain areas where infection control is an issue.

5. Provide windows with integral mini-blinds.

Advantages: Provides a neat appearance; allows for easy cleaning (only the glazing is cleaned); excellent for areas where privacy and infection control is an issue, easy to operate.

Disadvantages: Expensive and may only be an option when the facility is undergoing an extensive renovation (window replacement); difficult to repair when parts break.

Note: Command Areas, Conference Rooms and Training Rooms/Classrooms may require special window treatments (either room darkening or customized treatments).